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Rome awards \$22.9M contract for AMSTE Research

by Fran Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — The Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate has awarded a \$22,935,128 contract to Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. of Melbourne, Fla., for development, integration, and demonstration of system technologies required for precision engagement of moving surface threats from long range.

The one-year contract is funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of Arlington, Va., as part of its Affordable Moving Surface Target Engagement (AMSTE) program. The directorate is serving as agent for the DARPA program, designed to investigate and develop technologies to affordably engage moving surface targets such as tanks, tactical ballistic missile transporters, and small boats.

“AMSTE research will develop a new capability for the military services to strike moving surface threats with precision from long ranges and in all weather conditions,” said Jon S. Jones, program manager in the directorate’s Information and

Intelligence Exploitation Division. “The program is primarily focusing on Ground Moving Target Indication (GMTI) radar, a sensor that can detect moving surface vehicles from long distances.”

Moving ground targets pose a significant challenge to current weapon systems because of the dynamics involved. Idle vehicles can accelerate to speeds of 60 miles per hour in less than 10 seconds — and stop in shorter periods of time. While typical military vehicles do not tend to accelerate or stop that fast, they still pose a significant challenge maintaining accurate tracks. Vehicles also tend to mix with other vehicles, travel within groups or convoys, start and stop often, and use terrain to block their detection.

“DARPA will use technology in development over the next several years to enhance the capability of the military to strike these moving ground targets with precision accuracy,” said Jones. @